

# Walker War

## aka:

# Walkara War

17 July 1853 - 12 Aug 1854  
in council in Provo

Ref: "Hist. of Spanish Fork" p45  
"Utah, The Right Place" p113

Walker War

17 Jul 1853 11 May 1854 @ Chicken Crk

Started @ James Ivie  
Home in Springville, Ut

See Echo War List  
("Indian War Veterans")

Indian  
Wars

Walker War 17 July 1853 - 12 Aug 1854  
Gunnison Massacre 26 Oct 1853  
Tonic Late Fall 1855 - 1856 Several Skirmishes  
Echo War Fall 1857-8  
Battle Creek War 1859  
Black Hawk 10 Apr 1865 to 20 Aug 1867  
River Massacre 26 May 1865  
Gunnison Massacre 26 Oct 1853

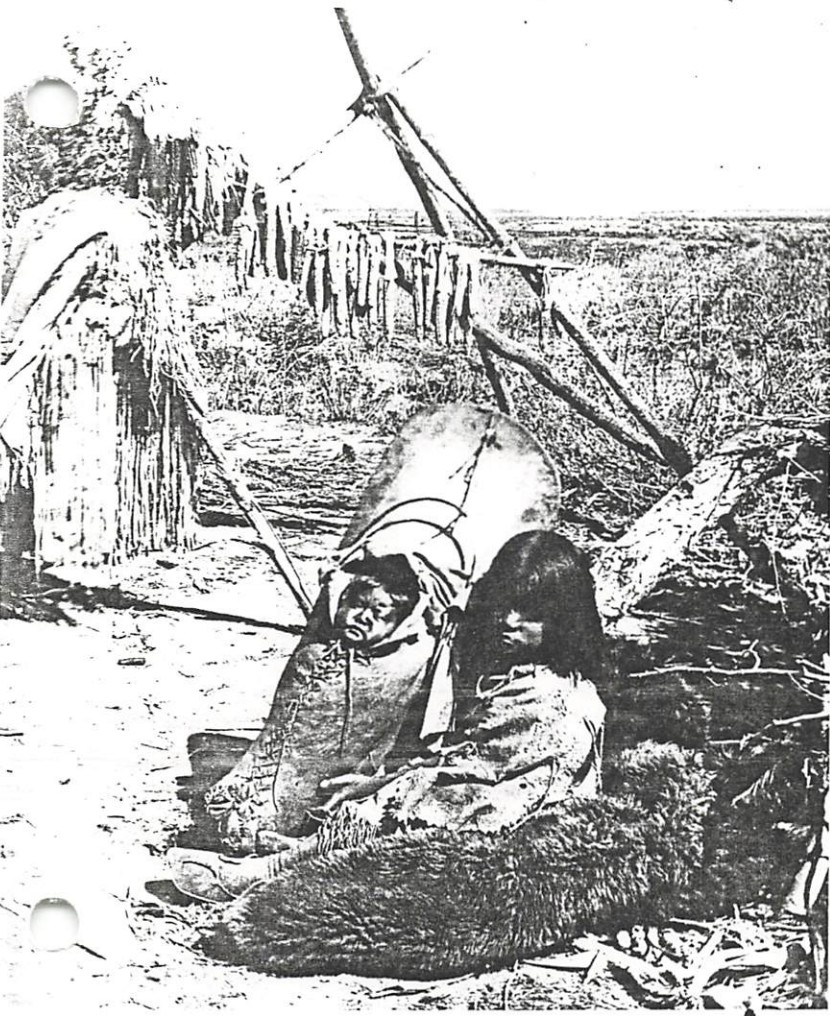
Walker W. A.

1943

Walker W. A.

1943 July 1 - 1943 July 1





This Ute domestic camp scene was located in the Uintah Valley on the eastern slope of the Wasatch Mountains. (Photograph by J. K. Hillers of the Powell Expedition [1873], Smithsonian Office of Anthropology, courtesy Utah State Historical Society.)

survey a strip of land between the thirty-eighth and thirty-ninth parallels as part of a search for a transcontinental railroad route. Anxious to determine the most feasible and politically acceptable route from the Mississippi Valley to the Pacific Coast, Congress had authorized four surveys of possible transcontinental corridors. Gunnison found the thirty-eighth parallel route unsuitable for a railroad, but his decision to camp on the Sevier bottoms suited the Pahvants quite nicely.

### ENDING THE WALKER WAR

Following the violence of late 1853 and early 1854, a number of Ute leaders offered terms for peace. In spite of some raids in January and

February 1854, Ute bands, camped in central and southern Utah and headed by Chiefs Ammon and Migo, said they were ready to lay down their arms. In March and again in May, Walkara, who had since returned from Navajo country, petitioned the settlers and Brigham Young for peace as well. Ever the shrewd trader, Walkara asked for food, guns, and ammunition, offering to sell portions of central Utah lands in return for annuities to be paid in cattle and horses over a twenty-year period. In addition, he wanted security for his trade in Paiute captives.

Young also favored the renewal of normal relations and an end to war and murder. Trying to work out an agreement, Young and Walkara met at Chicken Creek in Juab County on May 11, 1854. After Young arrived at Walkara's camp, the proud chief refused to come out of his tent to greet Young, insisting that the governor come to him instead. Recognizing a tense and potentially explosive situation, Young and George A. Smith walked to Walkara's tent. After they arrived, they found one of his daughters seriously ill. Touched by her suffering, they gave her a healing blessing.

Although the negotiations at Chicken Creek ended the immediate conflict, they solved none of the underlying issues. In fact, they left open wounds that continued to ooze the blood of Utes and Mormons through the Black Hawk War of the 1860s. In February 1856, the Tintic War, a series of skirmishes named after a Ute subchief, inflamed the people in the Tintic and Cedar Valleys, largely because Indians, who were starving in the drought, began taking cattle from the settlers. The war resulted in a number of clashes and deaths.

The wars ended only after the federal government removed the Utes to the Uintah and Ouray Reservation in the Uinta Basin during the late 1860s and early 1870s. Since the federal government did not buy the Ute lands, the issues festered until after World War II, when the Indian Claims Commission ordered payment for confiscated lands. Mormons forced the end of the New Mexican trade in human



26 Oct 1853  
from the various settlements and sent them northward. Attacks continued into August 1853 as Utes tried to take a Salt Lake-bound herd of surplus cattle near Clover Creek in Rush Valley. The war spread into northern Utah as Utes attacked four men hauling lumber near Park City (then Parley's Park), killing two and wounding one other.

Walkara left for northern Arizona for the winter, but Wyonah, brother to Shower-O-Cats, and other sympathetic Utes continued fighting. During the fall, Utes killed and mutilated settlers, most of whom were working in isolated parties outside the towns in defiance or disregard of the orders to remain in large groups. Such attacks occurred at Fillmore, Fountain Green (then Uinta Springs), Santaquin (then Summit Creek), and Manti. Raids included the burning of Spring City, which the settlers had already abandoned, and the theft of a large herd of cattle near Spanish Fork.

Instead of following a conciliatory policy as Young had directed, Mormon settlers responded in brutal kind. A militia unit in Utah County assaulted a Ute camp near Goshen, killing four or five people. At Nephi, on October 2, 1853, after eight or nine Utes came to the fort seeking protection, a group of townspeople slaughtered them "like so many dogs" and then reported the murders as deaths during a skirmish.

### THE GUNNISON MASSACRE

Undoubtedly, the murders with the greatest long-range consequence occurred on the early morning of October 26, 1853, when Capt. John W. Gunnison of the Corps of Topographical Engineers and a party of seven had camped on the lower Sevier River in Pahvant territory. The murder of Gunnison and his party by the Pahvants may have come in retaliation for the death of a Pahvant killed by members of a passing wagon train. Alternatively, the deaths—like those of settlers working outside in small parties—may have resulted from their distance because of fortified settlements. More seriously for the Utah settlers, however,

anti-Mormons attributed the death to Mormons acting under Brigham Young's instructions.

Gunnison had previously assisted Capt. Howard Stansbury, a topographical engineer, on explorations in northern and central Utah. In 1849, Col. John J. Abert of the Corps of Topographical Engineers had assigned Stansbury to retrace the route from Fort Leavenworth to Fort Hall; explore a wagon road from the fort to the Great Salt Lake; examine the suitability of the lake for transshipment of supplies from the Mormon settlements; survey the lake, the Jordan River, and Utah Lake; determine the capacity of the Mormons to provide food and supplies for overland travelers; report generally on the Mormon economy; and locate a site for a military post near Salt Lake. The explorations of Stansbury and Gunnison, aided by Brigham Young's secretary Albert Carrington, led to the publication of Stansbury's report (Philadelphia, 1852) and Gunnison's book *The Mormons* (Philadelphia, 1852), both of which offered favorable accounts of the Saints at a time when most national observers considered them in about the same category as we would consider cultist fanatics today.

In 1853, Col. Abert ordered Gunnison to



**Captain Howard Stansbury was an early western explorer for whom Stansbury Island on the Great Salt Lake was named. (Photograph courtesy University of Utah, Special Collections, Marriott Library.)**